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22 July 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: COINS Project Manager

SUBJECT : COINS Objectives and Master Plan

REFERENCE : Your Memorandum, Same Subject,
Dated 1 July 1968

The referenced memorandum requests my comments on a set of COINS objectives contained therein which you plan to submit to the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) after they have been worked up in final form. The referenced memorandum grew out of your earlier undated memorandum titled "COINS Master Plan," which was submitted to the COINS Committee in mid-May for comment.

At the COINS Committee meeting of 7 June, I submitted my comments on the latter memorandum. My comments consisted of a suggested rewrite of your memo. My rewrite laid more stress on describing to the DCI the objectives and plan for the COINS experiment and less stress on long term objectives, though I did include the more important objectives (tasks?) which both you and I feel should be undertaken as preliminary planning for an operational COINS system. I included only a few longer term tasks (FY 70-71) and inserted a paragraph that dealt with contingency planning should COINS be disapproved.

At the 7 June meeting, I stated that my rewrite was suggested as an outline of what should be included in the Master Plan. My thought was that if we could agree on what should be included, then we could get on with preparing it.

In the referenced memo, you have incorporated my suggested changes, but you have gone much further than I in terms of specifying near and long term future tasks which you feel should be undertaken. I think we have a basic disagreement over two points.

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- a. I do not think we agree on the definition of a COINS "objective."
- b. I feel that the major emphasis in the Master Plan should be on the COINS experiment and on the more immediate tasks involved in planning for an operational system should COINS continue beyond the experimental stage. You apparently feel that longer term planning should be undertaken now.

In my view, the objectives of COINS are rather fundamental. They are:

- a. To develop an experimental computer based information system which will provide the intelligence officer an opportunity for remote query of selected information in other agencies.
- b. To provide the minimal data required to provide evidence of utility of such a system to the intelligence community; for example, additional data on the Soviet biographic problem.
- c. To provide the above defined system without respect to its economic justification in its initial experimental form (in an effort to verify its use to the analyst and its long run prospect as an economic solution to the information handling problems of the intelligence community).
- d. Evaluate the system and determine those system elements and attributes which are critical to the success of an operational system.
- e. Develop objectives and specification for an operational system. Determine resources required (e.g. costs) and prepare a plan (or alternative plans) for development and implementation.

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In other words, at this stage of COINS development, objectives are concerned with testing the recommended COINS system of information exchange within the intelligence community as opposed to some other more or less sophisticated method of information exchange. Therefore, hooking up overseas components to the COINS network or planning for the provision of graphic display, may (or may not) be desirable features of an operational COINS system, but they are certainly not COINS objectives.

Regarding what should be included in the Master Plan and what planning time period it should cover, I find the following four paragraphs in the DCI's memorandum for the Director, NSA concerning "Management of the COINS Experiment" most applicable:

- a. "Identify the tasks to be accomplished during the COINS experiment and the resources necessary to achieve them."
- b. "Develop a set of objectives for the COINS experiment, including an implementation schedule. This should be submitted by you to me for approval."
- c. "Coordinate COINS budgets, plans and programs of each participating organization to achieve the approved objectives within the desired time frames."
- d. "Prepare and submit to me through you a COINS master plan which integrates into a single package the budget, plans, programs, implementation schedules and resources of the COINS experiment for the participating organizations. This plan should be submitted by the end of October of this year."

I think we should go a little beyond this and include as an objective, the plans and specifications for an operational system so that the impetus started by the experiment will continue when the experiment terminates. However, it is clear to me, that the DCI is primarily interested in the near term objectives of

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COINS, and the hows and wherefores of testing and evaluating those objectives through the experimental method to derive an objective judgment as to the value of the COINS method of information exchange among agencies of the intelligence community. Therefore, I do not think that most of the so called objectives contained in the referenced paper are the kinds of objectives the DCI has in mind. I am inclined to go with the objectives stated herein and to stick with my written and verbal comments to your earlier paper. I think they were more in line with what the DCI expects of a master plan than the current version contained in the referenced memorandum.

[Redacted Signature]

CIA COINS Manager

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